
Women smokers face twice the lung cancer risk

But females are less likely to die from the disease, study finds

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Updated: 4:56 p.m. PT July 11, 2006

CHICAGO - Cigarette-smoking women run twice the risk of lung cancer as men who smoke but are far less likely to die from the disease than males, according to a study published Tuesday.

Why women are more susceptible to the cancer-causing agents in cigarette smoke is not clear, the report said, but the findings indicate that women who smoke should be screened sooner and targeted with anti-smoking messages earlier.

The conclusions, from researchers at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center in New York City, were based on 7,498 women and 9,427 men, at least 40 years of age and with a history of cigarette smoking, who were checked for lung cancer between 1993 and 2005.

When the study started none had lung cancer. Later 156 women and 113 men developed the disease.

"Given the same exposure, women are less likely to die from lung cancer than men, but they also have double the risk of getting the disease," said Claudia Henschke, the physician who led the study. "We're not really sure why that might be."

Overall, women were 52 percent less likely to die of the disease, said the report published in this week's Journal of the American Medical Association.

Henschke said public health officials need to warn teen-aged girls especially that they face a higher risk of lung cancer.

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